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NEWSPAPER

Nation's
Restaurant News®

The Weekly Newspaper of the Food-Service Industry

Vol. 23, No. 12 | Published every Monday by Lebhar-Friedman Inc.; $3 a copy, $29.50 a year | March 20, 1989

Seafood shortages scramble menus

Chefs look for new fish species to fight price, supply problems

By Jack Hayes

CHARLESTON, S.C. — Hampered by shortages and escalating prices of many popular varieties of fish, the nation's chefs are scrambling to rewrite lunch and dinner menus with a new generation of substitute seafood products.

Fish that were unknown or scorned as trash only a few years ago are suddenly surfacing to replace favorite seafood staples that have either risen too high in price or become unavailable for reasons of overharvest, pollution, or rising foreign consumption.

"We're simply running out of product," said Victor Gielisse, one of six judges at the third American Seafood Challenge here, in which culinary entrants from 36 states competed for the title Champion Seafood Chef for 1989.

"With supply, cost, and quality problems, we're using more farm-raised species, like California black sea bass, black drum, tilapia, and catfish," added Gielisse, who is the co-owner of Actuelle in Dallas and was champion chef of the 1987 Seafood Challenge.

"The why of seafood substitution is easy: We need more and more fish," added Wolfgang Bierer, chief consultant with L.J. Minor Corp.

The uncertainty of freshfish availability and price and the rise in seafood substitutes are the main reasons for the wide popularity of daily menu specials today, Bierer suggested.

In seeking replacements for

(See SHORTAGES, page 78)

Selling more seafood starts with educating serving staff

Report from the Boston Seafood Show, page 3

Jean Josselin, the executive chef at Coco Palms Resort in Lihue Kauai, Hawaii, celebrates his trophy and his victory at the 1989 American Seafood Challenge.

Baked stone bass carries Josselin to Challenge win

By Jack Hayes

CHARLESTON, S.C. — A baked stone bass with fresh herb crust and black-pepper sauce ostewam a tidal wave of scallops, shark, and Finnan Haddie to emerge as the 1989 American Seafood Challenge victor.

"Aloha!" yodeled Jean Josselin, the Frenchman turned Hawaiian who was crowned Seafood Chef of the Year as he and 35 other culinary masters from around the country toweled off after three grueling days of competition.

An executive chef at Coco Palms Resort in Lihue Kauai, Josselin equally thrilled the judges with his hot smoked ling cod and fried sesame spinach; stir-fried rock shrimp with shiitake, red endive, and mini

(See JOSSELIN, page 78)

FOOD WATCH

Anything goes . . . even alligator appetizers

DALLAS — In these days of low fat, low calories, and low cholesterol, anything goes, including alligator.

The fat content of alligator meat ranges from 1 percent to 1.5 percent, vs. 25 percent for rump roast and 6 percent for chicken, according to chef Jim Severson of Dakota's restaurant, who includes an appetizer of alligator bits with piquant sauce on his menu. The protein content of alligator meat is approximately 22.2 percent, vs. 17 percent for choice-grade rump roast and 32 percent for light meat chicken without skin.

Severson's alligator dish is made with 1 pound of alligator tail, two eggs, 2 ounces of milk, two cups of bread crumbs, one-half cup of flour, one teaspoon of salt, and one-quarter teaspoon of white pepper.

"Alligator works well as an appetizer because it allows customers a taste to see if they like it," Severson said. "So far the response has been very positive."

— Ken Frydman

Burger King may profit from S&A sale

By Peter Romeo

MINNEAPOLIS — In moves that signal imminent changes for Burger King, Grand Metropolitan is selling S & A Restaurant Corp. to a management-led group and is issuing pink slips to 23 percent of Pillsbury's headquarters staff here.

Grand Met has confirmed that the $431 million it will net from the S & A deal will be plowed into a recovery program currently being plotted for the ailing Burger King chain.

"We will invest the proceeds in the growth of Pillsbury Foods and Burger King to enhance our shareholders' investment in Grand Met's most recently acquired U.S. operation," said Ian Martin, who heads the London-based conglomerate's North American operations. He is also serving as chairman of Burger King.

Grand Met acquired Pillsbury, the former parent of Burger King and S & A, for $5.68 billion in January.

Joining S & A's management in the

(See GRAND MET, page 4)

NRN readers lambaste INS on crackdown

By Richard Martin

An overwhelming majority of readers who called the Nation's Restaurant News Hot Line blasted federal enforcement of the immigrant-worker law.

The irate callers were responding to Nation's Restaurant News reports about a massive wave of fines the Immigration and Naturalization Service has levied against restaurants. They said that compliance with the law's stringent record-keeping and hiring provisions is hampered by vague or unrealistic rules.

Assuming the pseudonym "Mad as Hell," a Texas restaurant company president caller said: "The INS is simply a group of overzealous, otherwise-

(See READERS, page 78)

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NEWS DIGEST

LA commission eyes plan to require more parking

LOS ANGELES — The city planning commission has drafted a proposal that would require new restaurants to provide five times as many parking spaces as are currently mandated for eating places.

Office buildings and designated redevelopment areas in Hollywood and downtown would be exempted from the requirement to increase parking from two spaces per 1,000 square feet to 10 spaces for the same area.

The commission is scheduled to review a draft ordinance April 13. If passed, it would need City Council approval and the mayor's signature before becoming law.

Management-led group buys Bresler treat chain

DES PLAINES, Ill. — A management-led investment group has purchased Bresler's, operator of the 300-unit Bresler's Ice Cream & Yogurt Shops chain, from Oberweis Dairy. The price was not disclosed.

Included in the group are David Lasky, Bresler's president, and Alan Marti, senior vice president and director of operations. The buyers disclosed plans to hasten Bresler's expansion.

Oberweis bought Bresler's in 1987 from Stanley Bresler. Previously named Bresler's 33 Flavors Ice Cream Shops, the chain had remained in the Bresler family since its founding in 1929.

Court restrains Pizza Hut from using certain slogans

EL PASO, Texas — A U.S. District Court here has temporarily restrained Pizza Hut from using slogans that competitor Little Caesars claims are infringements on its protected "Two Great Pizzas! One Low Price" marketing theme.

The Pizza Hut slogans that Farmington Hills, Mich.-based Little Caesars is taking issue with read "Two Great Pizzas! One Great Price" and "Two Great Pizzas! One Fantastic Price," said a Little Caesars spokesman.

Pizza Hut, which would not immediately comment, has asked that the case be removed to federal court, a move Little Caesars is trying to counter.

Group tenders bid for Arby's parent

MIAMI — A New York investment group has tendered a $572 million bid for DWG Corp., the parent here of the Arby's fast-food chain.

However, the suitors did not detail their plans for financing the $22-per-share offer, leading Wall Street to view it with some skepticism. DWG shares were trading around $7.75 before the bid was placed.

The investment group is led by Andrew Heine, chairman of Kinney System, an operator of New York parking garages. He was also a partner in Finley, Kumble, Wagner, Heine, Underberg, a well-known New York law firm that disbanded last year.

Coniston nominates 3 for TW Service's board

NEW YORK — Coniston Partners is escalating its battle for control of TW Services, the parent of Denny's and Canteen Corp., by seeking to nominate three officers of a Coniston subsidiary for election to TW's board of directors.

Before revealing the new tactic, Coniston disclosed that TW shareholders had offered to sell more than 34.6 million of TW common shares for $29 each. Those issues, coupled with the shares already held by Coniston, would give the raider more than 90 percent of total TW shares outstanding.

TW is resisting the takeover, citing concerns that Coniston is buying the food-service company to strip it of assets. In addition to Denny's and Canteen, TW owns the Quincy's steak-house chain and operates some 300 franchised Hardee's units.

Collins' ceo hints at consolidation with Sizzler

By Rajan Chaudhry

NEW YORK — Collins Foods International Inc., one of food service's leading performers, is seeking to consolidate some operations and sell off others — possibly even its 207 domestic Kentucky Fried Chicken units — to focus on its stronger businesses.

Richard Bermingham, chief executive and president of Collins, told a stock conference here that he wants to combine the company with its 64-percent-owned subsidiary, Sizzler Restaurants International.

Bermingham also said that it "could make sense" for Collins, Kentucky Fried Chicken's largest franchisee, to sell its KFC units back to the franchisor.

In addition, he said, Collins expects to complete within three months the sale of two holdings: Ed Debevic's Short Orders Deluxe, a concept that helped kick off the current diner craze, and Original Gino's East of Chicago, a pizzeria restaurant. Together, the operations should fetch about $25 million, Bermingham said.

The divestitures and combinations would enable Collins to focus more intently on its two strongest operations, Sizzler and overseas KFC restaurants.

Collins' domestic KFC division has experienced flat profits and slow sales growth over the past several years.

"Selling is one alternative, and it's not a bad one," Bermingham said. "KFC would love to have a stronger position and market presence on the West Coast."

However, he added, "they don't seem to want to pay me what I think it's worth." He expressed surprise that KFC didn't approach Collins a year ago when stock prices were low.

Nine years ago, in an effort to diversify, Collins spun off 36 percent of Sizzler to the public to raise capital for the restaurant-only Sizzler company. Since then, Collins has changed its strategy, having decided to devote its resources only to its Sizzler and KFC operations.

"Now there's really no need to have two public companies," Bermingham said.

He explained that the consolidation would save about $250,000 a year, but he noted that a simple buy-back of the stock would mean booking $100 million in goodwill.

CKE exec pleads innocent to insider trading charges

LOS ANGELES — Alvin A. DeShano, general accounting director of Carl Karcher Enterprises, has pleaded not guilty to criminal charges of insider trading and securities fraud. He was ordered to stand trial here on April 25.

"In the meantime Al remains an active employee," said Loren Pannier, chief financial officer of the California company, parent of the Carl's Jr. hamburger chain. "This matter should have no effect on the company's business."

The case against DeShano stems from the Securities and Exchange Commission's civil suit charging 16 Karcher relatives and employees, including chairman Carl N. Karcher, with activities related to the sale of company stock before the public disclosure of unfavorable earnings data.

Buckley brothers sell Nathan's Famous stake

NEW YORK — Richard and Steven Buckley have agreed to sell their equity interest in Nathan's Famous Inc. and apparently to step down as president and executive vice president, respectively.

The brothers said they have accepted an unspecified bid from another member of Equicor, the Buckley-led investment group that acquired Nathan's in 1987 for $21 million.

FOCUS | OPINION

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Educational funk: Management schools

It is long past time for universities and colleges to modernize their hospitality management programs. This means making the "restaurant" at least equal to the "hotel."

Yet the major educational establishments have steadfastly declined to recognize the emergence of restaurants as a prime, if not a No. 1, element in the hospitality equation. Leading hospitality schools have too often encouraged students to focus on hotel rather than on restaurant careers.

Editor's Corner
Charles Bernstein

Two notable exceptions where "restaurant" officially comes first are Purdue University's Restaurant Hotel and Institutional Management School and Texas Tech University's Restaurant Hotel and Institutional Management program. Everyone else seems to go in the direction of HRIM rather than RHIM.

The vast majority represent an archaic remnant of the days when hotels and their restaurants dominated a fledgling food-service industry — a trend that was reversed three decades ago. At best, the response of management schools to the changing market has been appallingly slow.

Cornell University — which is still considered the leading hospitality management school — has set the tone for the entire trend. Despite a renown and distinction as one of the only schools of its kind not subservient to a business college or home economics college, it is still called the School of Hotel Administration.

The word "restaurant" is not even in the name, although many unofficially say School of Hotel & Restaurant Administration and restaurants are recognized more in the curriculum than formerly. Nevertheless, "hotel" still comes before "restaurant" under any terminology.

Hundreds of Cornell Hotel School graduates actually are food-service executives, making it doubly surprising that the school has resisted adding the word "restaurant" to its name. Cornell has launched a widespread search for a new dean of this prestigious school, and we hope that the choice will be someone with a realistic view of the emergence of the restaurant industry as a potent force.

Other venerable institutions now have the word "restaurant" in their names but insist on keeping "hotel" first. Among the most notable are Michigan State University and Penn State University, each of which calls its school Hotel Restaurant and Institutional Management. MSU's is under the Business College; PSU's, under the College of Human Development.

It is not a coincidence that in each case students opt by a three-to-one margin for other hospitality careers rather than one in restaurants. Perhaps the trend is also related to the massive recruiting efforts of the hotel industry.

MSU's school has emerged solidly from a four-year hiatus during which it had no permanent director. Penn State's, under the five-year administration of Andy Divine, has become a school rather than a program.

We do not see "restaurants" positioned first in the names or curriculums of a number of other key colleges: Denver University's Hotel and Restaurant Management School; Washington State University's Hotel Restaurant Administration program (still so named even though restaurants have emerged as dominant factors in its curriculum); the University of Massachusetts' Hotel Restaurant and Travel School; and Widener University's School of Hotel and Restaurant Management, Chester, Pa.

Trying to balance all elements under one roof are Florida University's School of Hospitality and Management and California Polytechnic Institute's Pomona Center for Hospitality Management. But the University of Nevada at Las Vegas calls a spade a spade with its Harrah's Hotel College.

A major force in hospitality education is Johnson & Wales University, Providence, R.I., and Charleston, S.C. The former emphasizes culinary arts, hotel-restaurant management, and business-marketing courses.

Culinary schools are also pushing into management curricula. One prime example is the New England Culinary Institute of Montpelier, Vt., which is launching a service and management program "to extend the professionalism of America's kitchens to the dining rooms."

Perhaps the reason "hotel" invariably comes before "restaurant" is that the schools often operate their own hotels and train students there. Cornell's extensively remodeled Statler Inn recently reopened, and Johnson & Wales is putting a major investment into its own hotel.

But while the food-service industry faces a major labor crisis, it is imperative for America's leading hospitality management schools to emerge from the Dark Ages and start emphasizing — in name and curriculum — restaurant management as a specific career.

These schools must enter the modern age, and they must escape from the attitudes of an era during which hotels indeed dominated.

If Purdue and Texas Tech can set such fine examples, then Cornell, Michigan State, Penn State, and others can do it, too!

LETTERS

Operators: Don't give up on minimum-wage issue

Editor, NRN:

I continue to read with interest NRN's editorials on the legislative front. I am particularly disturbed by your assertion that the industry may have to agree to some sort of minimum-wage bill, such as the one that died in Congress last year.

I read the committee report on that bill quite carefully. It acknowledged a discrepancy in the treatment of tips within the federal code, which it said should be avoided. All tips are recognized by the IRS as taxable for employment tax purposes. Yet the Labor Department only recognizes the same tips to the extent of $1.34 per hour.

The committee actually recommended a bill that would have gradually raised the minimum tipped wage year by year from its current $2.01 to more than $2.50 per hour by 1992. In an election year the clear purpose of this schedule of increases was not to reduce any tipped employee's wage.

As long as the employer FICA tax on tips remains, I do not believe this industry should let go of the compelling and irrefutable argument that tips should be treated uniformly in federal law. If tips are fully taxed like wages, then they should be fully recognized in satisfying the minimum wage.

Otherwise, this industry continues to have an effective minimum wage for tipped employees that is higher than in any other industry in the United States.

— **Andrew Reis**
vice president
Cafe Provençal
Evanston, Ill.

Restaurant packs them in with good old basic beef

Editor, NRN:

I certainly enjoyed your Editor's Corner about the New York steak houses, which are still enjoying popularity because of the quality of the beef! I just finished expressing the same sentiment to NRN Southeast editor Jack Hayes, when he conducted the interview with us for your publication and asked why we were so successful.

Thad and I always had a chuckle when we heard people expound the fact that in this day of nouvelle cuisine and diet-consciousness no one wanted a big piece of beef.

The Angus Barn has had the same basic menu for 29 years, and we are still packing customers in, while many newer places with trendy menus and small portions come and go.

Thanks for the positive plug for our kind of restaurant.

— **Alice Eure**
The Angus Barn
Raleigh, N.C.

Trip to Kenya enhanced by crocodile at Carnivor

Editor, NRN:

Florence Fabricant's column on Carnivor in Kenya was excellent! Her description was most accurate and interesting. It is a most special restaurant.

The flowers and gardens give the place a truly tropical setting of great beauty. The crocodile was our favorite, with the impala a close second.

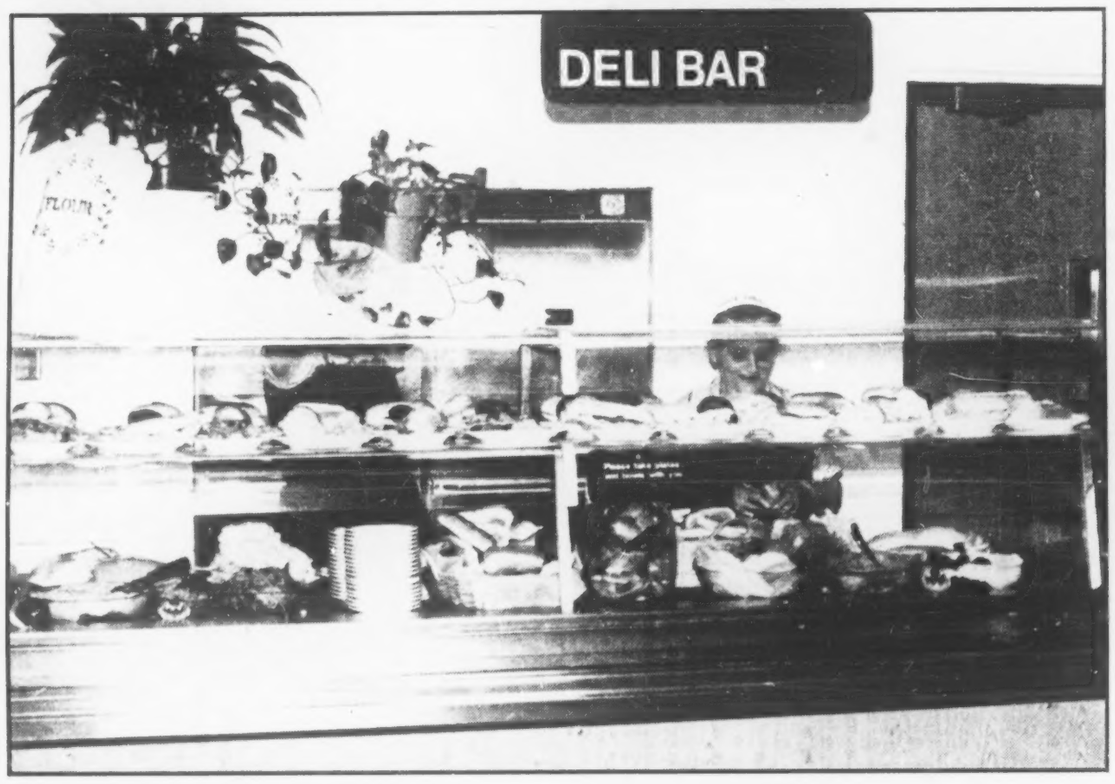
We find your newspaper most informative and have just one suggestion: more writeups on such fine international restaurants.

— **Tom B. Kullman**
president
Qualcon Inc.
Minnetonka, Minn.

FOCUS | COLLEGE FEEDING

THE NEW GRADE OF FOOD SERVICE

College food-service programs roll new retail and à la carte operations



NRN Photos

Left: The Deli Bar at Hope College in Michigan. Above: Student at the University of Florida creates salad at student salad bar.

By Bill Carlino

As changes in student demographics and eating preferences have an impact on college and university food-service programs, campuses throughout the country are gradually shifting from mandated meal programs to retail and à la carte operations.

In a food-service segment where combined revenues for self-operated and contract feeders exceed $7 billion annually, food-service directors are installing multiconcept cash outlets to appeal to all segments of the nation's 12.6 million collegiate students.

Long-perceived as a captive audience, college food-service programs now treat students as customers with high-powered spending capabilities.

At the majority of Marriott Corp.'s college dining accounts, students encounter the "Grand Marketplace," a multiple food facility that serves everything from steak and lobster in its upscale La Cuisine, or salads by the ounce in the health-oriented Greenstuffs.

In addition to residence dining halls, Michigan State University boasts an extensive "food-court" and six additional snack bars, while lunch at Ohio State may entail a Big Mac at the McDonald's franchise in the student union.

College food-service directors have even tailored programs for part-time and off-campus students.

At the University of Pennsylvania, both commuter and resident students who may miss the noon meal because of a schedule conflict can call the cafeteria 24 hours in advance to receive a box lunch.

Twenty percent of the students on meal plans at Baylor University utilize the convenient "Lunch Express," a take-out option.

Even meal plan payments have evolved to the computer age, as "declining balance" software programs allow students to purchase meals with the use of magnetized debit cards in lieu of antiquated coupon systems.

"College food-service operators are now beginning to perceive themselves as revenue producers instead of revenue consumers," says Clark DeHaven, executive director of the National Association of College and University Food Services. The 530-member NACUFS helps collegiate food-service directors improve their feeding programs through networking.

"For years food-service programs were simply another budgetary concern and were not expected to make money," DeHaven says. "Now they're expected to turn a profit."

DeHaven adds that as colleges see more older students returning to pursue degrees, dining directors have to accommodate dining preferences that are somewhat different from those of an 18-year-old.

Bob Hirtle, senior vice president of the school and college division of the Seiler Corp., agrees that the days of the routine one or two entrée meals are a thing of the past.

"Today students have a greater awareness of what they're eating," says Hirtle, whose Massachusetts-based company has 115 college feeding accounts. "They want a larger and more healthful variety of food and different ethnic dishes, too."

To meet student's expanded fare demands, Seiler Corp. rolled out Cafe Selections, a program of varied meal concepts.

Included are the Bon Cafe, complete with a pricey menu and a cafe-type ambience; Stock Options, which offers a variety of soups; the Deli Board; a grill station; a dessert bar; Cuisine to Go, offering take-out fare; and Classic Resort, a beverage fountain offering coffees, teas, premium bottled sodas, and mineral waters.

To Contract or not to contract?

While retail food outlets are a common theme and profit center for all collegiate food-service programs, self-

*(See **NEW GRADE**, page F16)*

TOP COLLEGE FEEDING CONTRACTORS

Marriott Corp.
Washington
Chief executive of college food-service division: Jim Kahl.
Number of college feeding contracts: 450.
Number of annual meals served: 320 million.
Major accounts: Marquette University, Texas Christian University, Harvard Business School, Washington University, Georgetown University.
Estimated annual college food-service revenues: $345 million

Seiler Corp.
Waltham, Mass.
Chief executive of college food-service division: Bob Hirtle
Number of college feeding contracts: 115
Number of annual meals served: 45 million
Major accounts: Johns Hopkins, DePaul, Farleigh Dickinson, University of Maryland, Colby College, Catholic University
Estimated annual college food-service revenues: $60 million

ARA Services
Philadelphia
Chief executive of college food-service division: Clarence Koester
Number of college feeding contracts: 250
Number of annual meals served: 160 million.
Major accounts: University of Virginia, Clemson University
Estimated annual college food-service revenues: $300 million

Morrison Custom Management Inc.
Mobile, Ala.
Chief executive of college food-service division: Karl Oldag
Number of college feeding contracts: 112
Number of annual meals served: 100 million
Major accounts: University of Illinois, Chicago, Swarthmore, Duquense, I.U.-P.U.I, Indianapolis (a combined campus with branches of Indiana University and Purdue University)
Estimated annual college food-service revenues: $55 million

Service America Corp.
Stamford, Conn.
Chief executive of college food-service division: Tighe Merkert.
Number of college feeding contracts: 81.
Number of annual meals served: 65 million.
Major accounts: University of Florida, University of Alabama, Towson State, Wright State.
Estimated annual college food-service revenues: $143 million.

Canteen Corp.
Chicago, Ill.
Chief executive of college food-service division: Mike Globke
Number of college food-service contracts: 53
Number of annual meals served: 85 million
Major accounts: East Carolina University; University of California, Irvine; University of Kentucky
Estimated annual college food-service revenues: $40 million

FOCUS | COLLEGE FEEDING

NEW GRADE OF COLLEGE FEEDING

(Continued from page F15)

operated directors with sputtering programs consistently wrestle with the notion of whether to allow contract feeders to run their dining programs.

Contract feeders control 65 percent of all college and university food-service programs in the United States.

Contract feeding giants Marriott, ARA Services, Seiler, Morrison Custom Management, Canteen, and Service America account for an estimated 1,100 college and university feeding accounts.

The scramble for college feeding contracts is a cost-competitive market that is heating up, according to DeHaven of NACUFS.

"Contract feeders will guarantee anywhere from a 6- to 10-percent profit," DeHaven says. "Often they'll invest several million dollars to upgrade rundown equipment in exchange for a five- to 10-year contract."

The University of Idaho, the University of Virginia, and the University of the Pacific are schools that have recently switched from self-operated to contract feeders.

"There's always someone who says they can feed you cheaper," says Hirtle, whose company recently outbid Marriott for the DePaul University account. "College feeding is essentially a very restricted market because you have to compete for existing colleges. There aren't many new colleges being built."

Small colleges in particular seem to be a target for contractors, as the 35 percent of the schools that remain self-operated are generally larger universities.

Colleges can become ripe for a contract "takeover," particularly in an administrative transition phase.

A new dean or president may have come from a school where the food-service had been successfully contracted, or the financial director discovers that the present dining system has become too great a financial drain to continue self-operation.

"If you're a small school, you're almost forced to investigate the possibility of using a contractor," says Karl Oldag, vice president of college and university food-service sales for Morrison Custom Management.

Contractors claim a higher level of professionalism, experience, and research and development facilities.

A spokesman for the Marriott Corp. cites the dining facilities at the St. Louis-based Washington University as an example of the proper match between school and contractor.

Ten years ago Washington University's dining program was a wheezing facility serving 1,800 meal contracts out of a single dining hall. The school had two failed trials with separate institutional feeders.

It was at this point that the university signed the SAGA Corp. to handle the feeding contract. When Marriott absorbed SAGA three years ago, the company assumed Saga's feeding agreement.

Today Washington University features 11 retail dining facilities locations and serves 61,000 meals a week.

However, despite the influx of contract feeding, self-operators maintain that awarding a faltering program to a contractor may not be a panacea for food-service profitability.

"Business managers and college administrators are slowly discovering that contractors are not a college dining cure-all," says Bill Hickey, director of university food services at the University of Notre Dame.

Notre Dame, which reverted to self operation when its meal contract with SAGA expired, serves about 25,000 meals per day with a staff of 1,000.

Hickey says he's currently budgeted at $1.85 per plate for each meal served.

"The problems that may have been there before like labor and rundown facilities won't suddenly disappear when the contractor arrives," he says.

Hickey says that Notre Dame's eating alternatives include "The Huddle," a quasi-mall concept that includes a fast-service Chinese concept, Leprechaun Pizza, a retail facility, and a 2,000-item deli-convenience store combination.

Sales at "The Huddle" hit $1.9 million last year compared with $900,000 four years ago.

The University of Pennsylvania was another school that returned to self-operation following unsuccessful tries with two separate contractors.

Dining services director Bill Canney says that before he came aboard in 1976, Penn's food-service program had been losing an average of $1 million a year. Today sales for Penn's dining rooms division alone is approaching $11 million, while food cost hovers at 37 percent.

One of the most intricate examples of self-operation , Penn's hospitality services division consists of three residence dining halls, the Faculty and Alumni Club, the upscale Penn Tower Hotel, and a full banquet and catering division.

"Within four years of self-operation, we went into the black and have been there ever since," says Canney. "We had 3,300 student meal contracts 12 years ago and nearly 8,000 now without an increase in enrollment.

Canney says that the increase in meal contracts was an especially relevant statistic since Penn has an all-voluntary meal plan. He credits quality, variety, service, and flexibility as primary reasons for Penn's dining about-face.

Penn upgraded its dining format by scattering food stations in all seven cafeterias to slash waiting time on lengthy serving lines, installed "wellness" bars, featuring fresh salad fixings, and made box lunches available for time-pressed students provided that they call the cafeteria and order the boxed fare 24 hours in advance.

Canney and Penn hospitality services director Don Jacobs implemented a late--night snack bar for students who miss dinner because of scheduling conflicts.

"We also allow students to exchange one dining hall dinner per semester for a meal at our Penn Tower Hotel," Canney adds. "That not only gives them a break from the dining halls but allows them to experience an elegant dining experience with their standard meal contract."

Like all collegiate food programs, nutrition is emphasized in the Penn University meals through its Nutritional Computer Program.

Each of Penn's dining halls post a computer printout listing the nutritional value for meal.

Traditional board vs. declining balance.

While standard 21, 19, 15, six, and five-meal conventional board plans have been a staple of campus dining, many operators have converted to a declining balance system — a software-based bar code operation.

Using the conventional board system, a student signs up on a specified meal plan for a onetime cost. Regardless of the number of meals chosen in the board plan, a student is allowed unlimited trips through the serving line but can only come into the dining hall time one time per meal.

With a declining balance system, the student puts a certain amount of money in his or her dining account before the semester and receives a magnetized card that is electronically channeled to his or her account.

As the students pass through the serving line, each item is priced out electronically, and the total sum of the meal is subtracted from their accounts when they check out at the register.

However, unlike the fixed-price board plans, individual food budgets are up to the student. If they exceed the amount in their dining account, meal service is terminated until the fund is replenished.

"With a declining balance system, students tend to spend more money than a straight cash operation," says Tighe Merkert, vice president of sales and marketing for Service America Corp.

Service America uses a declining balance system in its large-scale University of Florida and University of Alabama dining accounts.

"The commuter students in particular like a declining balance system because they don't have to carry a lot of money when they want to eat," adds Merkert. Merkert says a downside to the declining balance system is the cost of software installation, which may not be cost-efficient in smaller universities or community colleges.

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Peg Howley, food-service director at the self-operated Ohio State says her operation is on the last phases of a $10 million dollar dining hall renovation. Besides refurbishing the dining facilities and equipment Ohio State plans to implement a declining balance system in lieu of the conventional method.

At Colorado College in Colorado Springs, Colo., food-service director Larry Stahlberg has melded an effective combination of a traditional board system with a declining balance system.

"The most common meal plan we have is the 11-meal flex plan with $140 of the up-front money allotted for snacks that can be subtracted with a declining balance system card," says Stahlberg. "Students pay a fixed price for the meal plan, and then we set aside the $140 for things like pizza and burgers."

Despite the magnitude of variety and food selections in college feeding, Seiler's Hirtle warns that operators can't wander too far from traditional markets and eliminate common junk foods.

U.S. COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY ENROLLMENT, 1984-1988
(in millions)

	Full Time	Part Time	Total
1984	3.67	8.60	12.2
1985	3.68	8.60	12.2
1986	3.62	8.90	12.5
1987	3.60	8.93	12.5
1988	3.76	9.00	12.6

Source: Center for Educational Statistics

Pizza still delivers

By Bill Carlino

Although "variety" is a contemporary buzzword for a progressive college food-service program, pizza remains one of the most requested and cost-efficient menu items in collegiate eating circles.

In an effort to expand retail college pizza markets, contract feeders are developing concepts to capitalize on the potential campus gold mine of cheese, dough, and tomato sauce.

Retail pizza themes range from ARA Services' "Itza Pizza," Marriott's "Wild Pizza," Canteen's "Pazzelli's," and Seilers' "Slices Plus."

"Pizza is one of the easiest and least expensive items to serve," says Dan Eusebio, food-service director at the Seiler-operated Colby College in Waterville, Maine. "Students never seem to tire of it, and the average food cost for pizza is approximately 27 cents per pie."

Since the inception of Slices Plus two years ago, Eusebio reports that Colby's pie sales have topped 250 a day, with half of them coming via a 6-inch personal pizza that is sold for $1.50.

In addition to the personal pizza, Colby College offers both 16-inch and 12-inch pies, which retail for $4.50 and $7 respectively.

In fact, pizza demand became so great that Eusebio instituted a dormitory delivery system.

Like Colby College, the Marriott-operated South Dakota State began a campus delivery system for its Wild Pizza.

Seven days a week between the hours of 5 p.m. to 11 p.m., pizza is delivered to all campus dorms. Payment for the pie can by via cash or the declining balance card.

South Dakota's delivery concept has become so popular that the program averages 175 pizzas per night.

"We had expected a positive response when we tried the delivery system, but not like this," says South Dakota State dining services director Jay Hayes.

Hayes reports the most popular pizzas are the "Jack's Combo," named after the school's jackrabbitt mascot, and "The Hobo," a large-sized pie with every available topping piled on.

ARA's Itza Pizza, which now has units in over 200 colleges, made such an impact at Clemson University in South Carolina that students once devoured over 1,200 pies in one night.